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they appear to proceed upon an intelligible principle. The progress of the nation supplies the thread—a thread never lost sight of; but a perception of character alone gives life to historic narrative, and it is only through a concise and accurate dealing with this element that events can be invested with human interest, and can blend with it to form the whole, which is—not social science, but history. When George M. Wrong discusses the European settling of the Revolution he goes into English politics of the time with a familiarity and ease which reveals personalities and psychological factors in a manner absolutely essential to a right attitude of mind on the subject. It is not enough to know causes and effects; one must shake hands with Lord Howe—yes, and with George III!

The forty-eighth volume, that entitled *Woodrow Wilson and the World War*, by Charles Seymour, head of the history department at Yale, is among the most remarkable in the series. Here exactly the same method is carried out as in the preceding volumes, and the result makes it appear that a study of the past may enable the historian of the present to see the events of our own time in as true a perspective as can the historian of the future. One does not see how a book written fifty years hence could be franker, more unbiassed, more critical in spirit, or for most human purposes more informing, than is this work of Dr. Seymour's. Besides giving a well-proportioned account of America's connection with the war and with the peace, it is quite the best thing yet written about Woodrow Wilson.

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THE RUIN OF THE ANCIENT CIVILIZATION AND THE TRIUMPH OF CHRISTIANITY. By Guglielmo Ferrero. Translated by the Hon. Lady Whitehead. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons.

With that sculpturesque clearness, that Italianate and classic lucidity, which is characteristic of him, the most original and philosophical of modern historians traces the history of the Roman Empire from the death of Alexander Severus in the year 235 to the final dissolution.

In the year 235 the ancient civilization, though enfeebled, was intact. What was the cause of its ultimate overthrow? "The principle of authority," writes Ferrero, "is the key to all civilization." In the earlier periods it was the Roman Senate which, though largely deprived of power, supplied this essential element. As soon as the moral power of the Senate was overridden, government had to rest upon force, and from force came anarchy. Various rulers, realizing this fundamental truth, strove to reconstitute authority by reviving Mithraism, or sun-worship, and by deifying themselves and their colleagues. They resisted Christianity because it was an individualizing and disintegrating force. But no real restoration of authority was achieved in Europe until, with the coöperation of Christianity, a new principle of authority, the divine right of Kings, was set up. Now, this also has been undermined, and we have even passed beyond the deification of the people, no longer believing in the dictum, *Vox populi, vox dei*.

Ferrero provokingly stops just at the point where the profounder part of his discussion should begin. He leaves us to draw inferences that we are not capable of drawing. In his chapter on the present state of Europe, he contents himself with remarking that, in view of the general weakening of authority, the strong nations must help the weaker ones if civilization is to be saved. The enfeeblement of authority is obvious enough; it appears not only in government, but also in business, in the church, and in the home. What do we respect? What do we appeal to? But the suggestion that the only cure is a return to some sort of absolutism is scarcely acceptable; it is not backed by argument; and there is no certainty that the author even intends it.

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INVENTION, THE MASTER KEY TO PROGRESS. By Rear-Admiral Bradley A. Fiske, LL.D. New York: E. P. Dutton & Company.

Rear-Admiral Fiske not only possesses no small portion of the divine fire of inventiveness, but also is sufficiently philosophical to be deeply interested in the nature of that mysterious faculty with which so few men in the history of the world have been endowed. The mystery is twofold. In the first place, one is struck by the fact that many of the most important, relatively modern inventions have been of a somewhat obvious nature. It is hard to see why movable type and the pointed screw were not invented earlier than they were—the consummation seems to have been unaccountably delayed. But, in the second place, the real mystery seems to be how men can invent at all. There is no certitude about the process; the idea, the inspiration, must simply come. The distinctive feature of the inventive process appears to be that there must be a conception of the completed thing hovering in the inventor's mind before the work of analysis and construction can even begin.

It may be urged that invention, as described by Admiral Fiske, is not so nearly unique a mental operation as he makes it appear; or again, one may say that invention enters into all our practical thinking more than he seems to recognize. All our real thinking, as distinct from mere meditation, centers around some problem or other. This problem must first be defined; then associated ideas must be called up and an attempt made to construct a solution; finally the solution must be tested either by logical analysis or by putting it to work. The only difference between an invention and the solution of any practical problem is, therefore, that while in the former the associations required are comparatively familiar and few in number, and hence easy to select from; in the latter the wide range of associations involved makes the twin processes of selection and construction confusing and difficult.

When all is said, however, it must be admitted that the mind of the great inventor appears to have an unaccountable facility in calling up associated ideas, and a sort of affinity for the right solution. The mystery, then, remains. Associationist psychology can no more explain the invention of the